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The Mongol–Bolshevik revolution: Eurasianist ideology in search for an ideal past☆

Sergei Glebov

Dept. of European History at Five College, United States

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In the decades following the disintegration of the Soviet Union "Eurasia" readily emerged as a convenient (and disputed) term to designate the former Soviet space. For some scholars, it contained the promise of revealing multifaceted cross-cultural (across the Old World) and cross-disciplinary (across disciplines studying the Old World) encounters within that space. For others, "Eurasia" was a geopolitical concept rooted in Russian imperial tradition and its extensive use entailed a recuperation of cultural and political strategies of the former imperial center (von Hagen, 2004a; von Hagen, 2004b; Kotkin, 2007a, 2007b; Annual conference of the Havighurst Center, 2006).[1] This ambivalence with respect to "Eurasia" continues to draw attention to the legacy of the Eurasianist movement which for the first time employed the term "Eurasia" to describe the former Russian Empire and to endow "Eurasia" with cultural, political and geographical content (Böss, 1962; Glebov, 2008; Laruelle, 1999; Riasanovsky, 1964, 1967, 1972a; Wiederkehr, 2007).[2]

Eurasianism as an intellectual and political movement emerged among the émigrés from the former Russian Empire in the 1920s and dissolved in the early 1930s. Central to the Eurasianist ideology was a holistic vision of Eurasia as a geographical system, an ethno-cultural unity,

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E-mail address: hammond@mit.edu.

[1] von Hagen (2004a); von Hagen (2004b); Kotkin (2007a). Tellingly, the title of the annual conference of scholars interested in post-socialist transformations was Locating "Eurasia" in Postsocialist Studies: The Geopolitics of Naming. See also the published version Kotkin (2007b). Another interesting example of a conference dealing with Eurasia was the colloquium at Lancaster University "Constructing Regional identities in the Post-Communist Space: Eurasia or Europe?", held on June 27–28. See http://www.lancs.ac.uk/ias/annualprogramme/regionalism/eurasia/index.htm, last accessed June 15, 2008. Also see Annual conference of the Havighurst Center (2006). The VIII World Congress of the International Council for Central and East European Studies will take place in Stockholm, Sweden, on 26–31 July 2010 under the title "Eurasia: Prospects for Wider Cooperation." www.iccees2010.se.

[2] Böss (1962); Riasanovsky (1964, 1967); Riasanovsky (1972a,b). For more recent studies see Laruelle (1999); Wiederkehr (2007). For a review of recent studies of Eurasianism see Glebov (2008).

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and a political space. Eurasianist thinkers considered this vision both as an outcome of specific historical processes, in particular due to the impact of the Mongol empire which for the first time united in one political entity the Eurasian space, and as a locus of unique, autarkic development. This autarkic development marked Eurasia as a space opposed to the phenomena which the Eurasianists associated with modern Europe, in particular to Europe's ever increasing individualistic and materialistic spirit. Not unlike their predecessors in the 19th century, the Slavophiles, the Eurasianist thinkers saw Orthodox Christianity as a kernel of Eurasia's identity. They treated the Russian revolution as a religiously meaningful historical transformation and expected a religious revival among the Russians that would help dislodge the Bolsheviks from power and establish a truly Eurasian government (Glebov, 2003, pp. 293–337).[3]

Observers, back in the 1920s and now, often found Eurasianism bewildering. If the Eurasianist ideology represented an intellectual turn to Russia's Asian connections, then how could this turn be reconciled with a stress on Orthodox religiosity so characteristic of Eurasianist thinkers? If indeed, as Nikolai Trubetskoi suggested, "the elemental, national uniqueness and the non-European, half-Asiatic face of Russia–Eurasia was becoming more visible than ever" in the wake of the Russian revolution, then how could the Revolution "be overcome on the firm grounds of Orthodox religiosity?" To answer these questions, I will argue below that the Eurasianist movement offered its own vision of the national mystique, which combined influences of Russian fin-de-siècle modernism, a proto-fascist search for the regeneration of national life, and a peculiar interpretation of Russian history in the wake of the empire's dissolution.

1. Exiles from the Silver Age: rhetoric of a new generation

A reconstruction of the history of Eurasianism has to begin with the life experiences of the movement's founders, who had barely entered their intellectual and professional lives on the eve of the Revolution of 1917, in the period that Catherine Evtuhov recently proposed to call "Silver Age" by extending a term from literary history to the whole range of phenomena characteristic of the last two decades of imperial Russia (Evtuhov, 1997, pp. 1–17). Some fundamental and defining premises of the Eurasianist movement – its disillusionment with liberal and progressive politics of the Russian intelligentsia but also a critical view of the religious renaissance of the 1900s – were rooted in the experiences of a generation born into the most "normal" period of imperial history. Religious searches and the anti-bourgeois sentiment inherited from that period were cast by the Eurasianist thinkers against the background of disintegrating imperial state and society in the revolution and the Civil War.

Between 1920 and 1928 (by the end of the latter year the original movement disintegrated yet some elements of it lingered on throughout the 1930s), many individuals were involved with the Eurasianist movement, ranging from ultra-conservatives and even fascists to left-wing scholars and writers. The scope of this essay does not permit a thorough discussion of this wider circle and its dynamics but we may presume that Eurasianism did reflect at least some concerns of the wider Russian émigré community and reverberated with its political and cultural dilemmas (Glebov, 2010a, pp. 20–23).[4]

Yet the core that led Eurasianism through the 1920s (the period of the movement's greatest cohesion and intellectual productivity) consisted of four individuals: Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoi, Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii, Petr Petrovich Suvchinskii, and Petr Semenovich Arapov. While others participated in the founding of the movement and its first publications – Prince A. A. Lieven and G. V. Florovsky in particular – both quickly disappeared from the network of correspondents who elaborated the Eurasianist ideology and pursued the editorial policies of Eurasianist publications in the 1920s (Blane, 1993, pp. 11–217; Lloid, 1997, pp. 5–8).[5] The four leading Eurasianists represented different intellectual and social milieus. N. S. Trubetskoi, eventually an outstanding linguist and a founder of structural phonology, came from the Moscow family of aristocrats and university professors. His father, Prince S. N. Trubetskoi, rector of the Moscow University was a well-known Christian philosopher and a follower of Vladimir Solov'ev (Bohachevsky-Chomiak, 1976; Trubetskaia, 1953). His uncle, E. N. Trubetskoi, was also a philosopher and a university professor, and a leading figure of the publishing house "Put'", which was at the center of attempts to combine Christian philosophy, Orthodox tradition, conservative liberalism and Russian nationalism (Gollerbakh, 2000; Poole, 2006, pp. 195–240).[6] N. S. Trubetskoi was called by a contemporary "an epigone of Moscow Slavophiles," and, indeed, the aristocratic Slavophile tradition was one of the defining elements of Trubetskoi's worldview (Gollerbakh, 2000; Vetlugin, 1922, p. 45, pp. 4–5).

Petr Nikolaevich Savitskii, on the other hand, came from the milieu of Russified Ukrainian gentry, the descendants of the Cossack starshina of the 17th century. His father, Nikolai Petrovich Savitskii, was the district Marshall of the Nobility, the chair of zemstvo administration, and on the eve of the revolution became a member of the State Council. P. N. Savitskii was deeply interested in his Ukrainian heritage: he began his publishing career with a book (co-edited with V. L. Modzalevskii) on the monuments of Chernigov, his native town in Ukraine. One of Savitskii's *nommes de plume* was Stepan Lubenskii, after his ancestor Stepan Savitskii,

[3] See interesting Correspondence between the Eurasianists regarding their specific political plans to convert the Bolshevik leaders to Eurasianism in Glebov (2003).

[4] See a discussion of the wider Eurasianist circle in Glebov (2010a), pp. 20–23.

[5] Georgii Vasil'evich Florovskii (Georges Florovsky) took part in the first publications of the Eurasianists, yet he virtually ceased any cooperation with the movement by the end of 1922. Throughout the 1920s, he was excluded from the editorial and organizational decision making and was associated with the movement by the public only due to his participation in the first collections. On Florovsky's life, see Blane (1993), pp. 11–217. Prince Andrei Aleksandrovich Lieven helped organize the Eurasianist group in 1920 but never took part in the movement's further development. On Lieven, see Lloid (1997), pp. 5–8.

[6] On E. N. Trubetskoi see Gollerbakh (2000); Poole (2006).

the Lubno coronel of the late 17th century Cossack Host. As a student at the Polytechnic Institute in St Petersburg, Savitskii became connected with Petr Berngardovich Struve, scholar, journalist and politician who gradually moved from Social Democracy and Marxism to liberalism and, in the final years of his life, in emigration, to conservative monarchist liberalism. Struve's work often focused on economic and political aspects of the imperial state and society in Russia, and Savitskii partook in this interest. His pre-revolutionary publications dealt with economic aspects of Russian imperial expansion (Glebov, 2005, pp. 299–329; Bystriukov, 2007).[7]

Petr Petrovich Suvchinskii hailed from Petrograd (Bretanitskaia, 1999; Souvtchinski, 2006).[8] He was born to a Russified family of Polish nobles. His father was a bureaucrat and a successful businessman, and his uncle an active participant in conservative noble circles in the Western gubernias. P. P. Suvchinskii studied at the celebrated Tenishev school in Petrograd, where he was taught by Vladimir Gippius, a teacher of Osip Mandel'shtam and of Vladimir Nabokov. Suvchinskii was musically inclined, and took piano lessons from the legendary Feliks Mikhailovich Bliumenfeld, a leading Russian musical pedagogue. As a very young man, Suvchinskii used his family's enormous financial resources to co-found *Muzykal'nyi Sovrememennik*, a leading Russian music journal, with A.N. Rimskii-Korsakov in 1916. After one year, Suvchinskii withdrew from the journal citing Korsakov's conservatism and lack of interest in "new music" represented by Stravinskii and Prokof'ev. In the following decades, Suvchinskii maintained active correspondence with both composers and was Stravinskii's ghost-writer at least on one occasion. Suvchinskii was favorably mentioned by Alexander Blok, whose ideas on the crisis of humanism became a starting point for Suvchinskii's own conceptualization of the Russian Revolution. During the revolutionary turmoil, Suvchinskii was the only Eurasianist who had any experience dealing with the new regime: he cooperated with Artur Lur'e, a well-known futurist and composer, who became the head of the Music Department of the People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (MuzO) (Glebov, 2006, pp. 163–223).[9]

The fourth leading Eurasianist, Petr Semenovich Arapov, differed from the first three in almost all respects. He joined the movement in 1922, when the Eurasianist conception had already taken its shape, and he was much younger and less educated than the other three leaders. While Arapov shared with his Eurasianist colleagues an aristocratic pedigree, he was much younger. Unfortunately, not much is known about him before his appearance in the annals of Eurasianism. Some sources suggest he was a graduate of Aleksandrovsky Lyceum, a prestigious school in imperial Russia. He certainly served in the Cavalry Guards regiment on the eve of the revolution and in the Volunteer Army during the Civil War. Savitskii later mentioned that Arapov was psychologically unstable due to his participation in mass executions while among the Whites. Unlike his colleagues in the Eurasianist movement, Arapov was not a prolific writer. His main focus was on the émigré politics as the Eurasianists attempted to convert as many émigré youths as possible to its cause. Arapov's family relationship with General Wrangell and his contacts among the White émigré military officers brought to Eurasianism a number of individuals from the military circles. He was also central in helping Eurasianism become mired in the web of underground links and contacts organized by the Soviet secret services as the latter created the sprawling fake monarchist organization "Trest" to infiltrate the emigration.[10] In fact, in all likelihood, Arapov was an agent of the GPU as early as 1924 (Glebov, 2009, pp. 41–45).[11]

There can be little doubt that intellectually Eurasianism was the brainchild of Trubetskoi, Savitskii, and Suvchinskii (with Arapov joing the troika to shape the movement politically), whose ideas and writings formed the controversial canon of Eurasianism, and who edited contributions by others. It is therefore important to understand the background of the three leading Eurasianist ideologues and explore their position vis-à-vis other intellectual trends in late imperial Russia and among the émigrés. Although their interests and biographies differed significantly, the three leading Eurasianists shared experiences that were formative for them as individuals and for the movement in general.

The Eurasianist scholars were all born in the 1890s, and matured when World War I already began. They belonged to this unique generation of the Russian educated classes who arrived on the scene significantly different from that of previous generations of the Russian intelligentsia. Politically, Russia already had a parliament, professional political parties, and elections, however limited or flawed these institutions might have been. Intellectually, the famous *Vekhi* debate signaled the end of the domination of the intelligentsia proper with its revolutionary and socialist sympathies (Kolerov, 2000; Read, 1979). The activities of the Religious Philosophical Societies and other groups (like the group around the publishing house *Put'*) provided space for the development of philosophical thought heavily influenced by neo-Kantian and neo-Platonic ideas, Christian theology, Orthodox tradition with its prominence of patristic writings, and liberal nationalism. Leading intellectuals were no longer social outcasts from their own estates, as were, for example, Alexander Herzen or Mikhail Bakunin. Rather, they were established professionals with university chairs or seats in the Duma or even in the more conservative State Council. Similarly, in the realm of literature and arts the efflorescence of high culture known as the Silver Age provided for an unprecedented diversification of cultural life. Again, social concerns of the intelligentsia, while they did not disappear altogether, ceased to dominate the cultural scene. Modernist critique of

[7] On Savitskii, see Glebov (2005); Bystriukov (2007).

[8] Suvchinskii remains the least known figure among the Eurasianists, despite several recent collections focusing on his life and writings: Bretanitskaia (1999); Souvtchinski (2006).

[9] On Suvchinskii's life and modernist aesthetics see Glebov (2006).

[10] On Trest, see.

[11] For information on Arapov, see Glebov (2009), p. 41, pp. 41–45.

contemporary civilization became more subtle, abstract, and spiritual. Often, as was the case of Alexander Blok, it focused on the ever-spreading "*meshchanstvo*", petty-bourgeois philistine conformism, and in the period of crises sought to identify forces that could destroy the standardizing work of the modern European civilization. Such forces were often seen in "Asia," which came to signify the "elements" of the Russian people untouched by modern European influences. Thus, a modernist "obsession with Asia" had a political meaning (Nivat, 1965, p. 460).

The founders of the Eurasianist movement matured in this period and were socialized successfully into its various milieus. N. S. Trubetskoi, a *wunderkind*, began publishing on folklore when he was 14, passed his magisterial exams in the spring of 1916 and became a *privat-dotsent* at Moscow University teaching Sanskrit. By 1917 he was firmly on the path of a very successful academic career (Antoschenko, 1998; Chizhevsky, 1939; Gumilev, 1995; Kleiner, 1985; Kochergina, 1998; Kondrashov, 1990; Kretschmer, 1939; Liberman, 1991; Neroznak, 1990; Nikishenkov, 1992; Poljakov and Trubetzkoy, 2005; Riasanovsky, 1964; Sobolev, 1991; Tolstoy, 1995; Toporov, 1990, 1991; Trubetzkoy, 1982; Wytrzens, 1964; Zhuravlev, 1990).[12] P. N. Savitskii entered the diplomatic service and was posted in Norway, while continuing his research into political economy and publications in P. B. Struve's *Russkaia Mysl'*. Suvchinskii, apart from founding *Muzykal'nyi Sovremennik*, maintained a peasant choir in his estate near Kiev and studied, following Kastal'skii, folk music, as well as produced a libretto for Derzhanovsky's planned opera. The Revolution and the following Civil War shattered their lives and sent them on different paths to exile.

Trubetskoi left Moscow in the fall of 1917 for Kislovodsk in the south and never returned to Moscow. He briefly taught at the Don University in Rostov, wandered in the cities of the Caucasus, and in December 1919 he left Rostov for Yalta in the Crimea, from where in February 1920 he was evacuated to Constantinople (or, rather, to the Russian refugee colony on the Prince's Islands). He remained there until June 1920, when he was hired by the University of Sofia in Bulgaria to teach Slavic languages. P. Savitskii also was in the South: in 1918–1919, he spent time at his estate near Chernigov, and then wandered in Odessa, Rostov, and the Crimea. He often fought in different White armies until becoming an assistant to his former teacher, P. B. Struve, at the time a "foreign minister" of the Crimean government of General Wrangell. Suvchinskii attempted to work with the new power in Petrograd together with Artur Lur'e, planning an overhaul of music theatres and launching a new musical publication, *Melos*, but left the city in the fall of 1918 and arrived in Kiev. Having spent almost a year there, Suvchinskii went to the Crimea, from which he was evacuated to Sofia in Bulgaria.

1.1. Through the shattered empire

These paths to exile ran through the borderlands of the shattered empire, and the future founders of the Eurasianist movement had a chance to observe its disintegration. In a letter to Roman Jakobson Trubetskoi recalled that "during my wanderings in the Caucasus I once came to Baku in March 1918, exactly during the 'Muslim uprising against the Soviet power,' or, more precisely, during this short period of time when the Armenians were slaughtering the Tatars (Jakobson, 1985b, p. 4)'. Interethnic conflicts in the Caucasus, similar to the "March Days" in Baku in 1918, to which Trubetskoi was a witness, undoubtedly colored his perception of the nationalist movements in the former Russian empire (Suny, 1972, pp. 214–233).[13] On the other hand, Trubetskoi, like many other participants and witnesses of the Civil War in the South of Russia, recognized the importance of the "borderland" or colonial peoples and took note of their "entrance onto world stage (Riasanovsky, 1972b, p. 5)." Similarly, Savitskii described his Civil War experiences, which combined wounded national pride, disillusionment with the White cause, and awareness of the empire's fragility:

> I saw the regime of the Central Rada; during three months by the force of word and the force of arms together with my friends-officers I had been defending my Chernigov estate from the Bolshevik gangs; I was liberated from this siege by the Germans and was a witness to their seven months long regime; as a subaltern I fought in the ranks of the Russian Corps, which defended Kiev from Petliura and I lived through the fall of the city; together with my father I fled – or left, who can tell? – the city of Kiev; I saw and touched the French in Odessa and waited long enough to see the "glorious" end of o*ccupation française*. From March 1919 to August I was in Ekaterinodar; from August to November I was floundering in the whirls of the Russian "White Sovdepia," the Russian South, which was just liberated from the Bolsheviks. I spent several weeks at the frontline and I lived in the cities and villages of Kharkov and Poltava. Then I moved to Rostov …(Savitskii, 1920)

When the eventual founders of the Eurasianist movement arrived in Sofia in 1920, they came fresh from experiencing the disintegration of the Russian empire along the social and ethnic lines. The very geography of the passage to exile led them through the Southern flanks of the former imperial state, where White Generals attempted to gather support for the anti-Bolshevik cause against the background of the ever increasing fragmentation and the rise of

[12] What follows is not a complete list of works on Trubetskoi and it can attest to the emergence of a virtual cult of Trubetskoi in today's Russian humanities. Chizhevsky (1939); Kretschmer (1939); Riasanovsky (1964); Wytrzens (1964); Trubetzkoy (1982); Kleiner (1985); Toporov (1990, 1991); Kondrashov (1990); Zhuravlev (1990); Neroznak (1990); Sobolev (1991); Liberman (1991); Nikishenkov (1992); Tolstoy (1995); Gumilev (1995); Kochergina (1998); Antoschenko (1998); Poljakov and Trubetzkoy (2005).

[13] Immediately following the events the Baku Soviet tended to represent them as a "Muslim uprising against the Soviet power," a view shared by the USSR historical profession. Publicists in the Russian emigration as well as Western scholars tended to emphasize the nationalist and ethnic component of these events, where leading Armenian and Muslim parties, including the Dashnaktsutiun and the Musawat parties, clashed. See Suny (1972).

national and proto-national movements. The Eurasianist scholars had known from their cabinet studies that Russia was an empire, a state with multiple territories, populations and languages that drastically differed from each other. Their flight from the capitals into exile across the disintegrating Russia provided them with a unique experience of observing the imperial fabrics being torn by contemporary social and political forces. This process was far removed from the imaginary binary opposition between Reds and Whites as it revealed multiple and conflicting forces and interests at different fronts of the Civil War in Moscow and St Petersburg, Ukraine, the Caucasus, the Don Cossack region or the New Russia and Crimea. It is not surprising that the Eurasianist scholars' primary interest was in a vision of Russia as a cultural and political unity in the form of the Eurasian utopia.

1.2. The rhetoric of a new generation

They also came to exile pondering the question of the meaning of the Revolution, and the role of the Russian cultural elite in bringing it about. The catastrophe begged for explanations, and, although each of the Eurasianists sought answers in their own fields of expertise, they shared some fundamental attitudes that laid the ground for an intellectual movement. In fact, the Eurasianist thinkers saw their consensus as a distinguishing feature of their own movement: as Trubetskoi reminded Suvchinskii during a crisis of Eurasianism in the late 1920s, "we never disagreed on important issues – remember? – and always thought that this was our distinct characteristic (Glebov, 2010b, P. 326)."[14]

This consensus rested on the shared attitude to the previous generation of Russian intellectual leaders, the generation of the *Vekhi* debate and of the *Put'* publishing house. This generation included the Eurasianists' intellectual fathers: P.B. Struve, the Trubetskoi brothers (Sergei, Evgenii and Grigorii), N. A. Berdiaev, S. N. Bulgakov, and many others. Often, these intellectuals with liberal inclinations were the Eurasianists' fathers *sensu stricto*. Savitskii's father was known in the *zemstvo* movement for his liberal views (Kurlov, 1992, chap. XVI).[15] D. P. Sviatopolk-Mirsky was the son of a high-ranking bureaucrat, yet Sviatopolk-Mirsky's term as the Minister of the Interior was marked by "liberal" attitudes. Sergei Nikolaevich Trubetskoi, N. S. Trubetskoi's father (as well as his uncles), was a well-known figure among the moderate liberals. Despite the fact that many Eurasianists were connected to this generation of the fathers in a myriad of ways, their attitude to it was militant and aggressive. The Eurasianists reserved their harshest judgments for this group and it was against this group that they chose to define their own identity as a generation.

Throughout the 1920s the Eurasianists repeatedly criticized those intellectuals who participated in the philosophical and religious "Renaissance" of the 1910s. Discussing the personality of Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev, Trubetskoi disapprovingly wrote about him to Petr Suvchinskii in January 1923: "I know Berdiaev. He appears to me first of all as a light-minded person. A while ago he told me that Christianity is outdated and needs a female deity…" (Trubetskoi, 1923). When in 1926 the Eurasianists discussed the possible participation of the philosopher Lev Platonovich Karsavin in the movement, Trubetskoi reminded Suvchinskii of "our old rule not to accept anyone of the previous generation" (Trubetskoi, 1926).[16] In the same letter Trubetskoi criticized his own uncle, Prince Grigorii Nikolaevich Trubetskoi, for his lack of resolve and told Suvchinskii that "indecisiveness is characteristic of this entire generation" (Trubetskoi, 1926). Grigorii Nikolaevich, a well-known diplomat, was a conservative liberal and a participant in the religious and philosophical "renaissance" of the 1910s.

In 1922 a group of outstanding intellectuals – all of whom were prominent before the revolution – was exiled from Russia on the orders of Lenin (Finkel, 2003).[17] Petr Suvchinskii from Berlin communicated to Trubetskoi his feelings about these exiles:

> I endure the arrival of these exiles as the greatest disaster. When the first group arrived (Berdiaev, Frank, Il'in), it had some *individual* selection of personalities. This time it is simply as if they transplanted a piece of turf from one cemetery into another, it looks like a piece of dead skin. They transplanted a completely outlived layer of culture from Russia to Berlin, and for what? Of course in order to lead the emigration and speak on its behalf and, therefore, to stifle everything which is new and vital and therefore *dangerous* for the Bolsheviks. Lenin who speaks and acts on behalf of Russia has nothing to do with it. But this intelligentsia, which is of course exiled by Lenin on purpose, does not represent anything anymore and will just compromise the new émigré generations (Rossiiskii Arkhiv, 1994).[18]

In 1924 the Eurasianists decided to explain their critique of the older generation of religious philosophers. In a programmatic article published in the Eurasianist annual almanac, Petr Suvchinskii wrote about the "religious and philosophical renaissance" of the 1910s[19]:

> "Nihilist moralism" and militant materialism [of the intelligentsia] were condemned and instead of these two, to use the *Vekhi* formulae, we heard appeals to embrace "concrete idealism" and "religious humanism."

[14] Cited from Glebov (2010b), p. 326, p. 326.

[15] Savitskii's father's liberalism is mentioned in the memoirs by Kurlov (1992), Ch. XVI.

[16] Trubetskoi (1926). Lev Platonovich Karsavin, who joined the movement in 1926 despite Trubetskoi's and Savitskii's opposition, had an established pre-Revolutionary reputation as a philosopher and medievalist. At the same time, he was a participant to the "religious and philosophical Renaissance" of the 1900s, and Trubetskoi objected to Karsavin's less than puritanical lifestyle.

[17] On the expulsion of 1922, see Finkel (2003).

[18] P. P. Suvchinskii to N. S. Trubetskoi. November 25, 1922. Quoted from Rossiiskii Arkhiv (1994).

[19] The Eurasianist Correspondence demonstrates that these annual publications (Evraziiskie Vremenniki) were treated by the leaders of the movement as their official tribune. All articles published there had to receive approval of the "editorial troika", which consisted of N. S. Trubetskoi, P. N. Savitskii and P. P. Suvchinskii. It is, therefore, safe to assume that the leaders of the movement subscribed to the ideas expressed in these articles.

> Nevertheless, however radical this general change of direction might appear, it could not actually have an impact on the broad course of events. Despite the "renovated ideals" the second revolution has erupted and has been going under the fanatic leadership of the outlived principles of militant materialism… Unfortunately, the religious, intellectual and political "renaissance" of the 1890s and the 1900s was not directed toward a broad all-national work. It did not become the assignment of the epoch (*zadachei epokhi*) and it appeared meaningful and significant only in the limited milieu of the intelligentsia, which was undergoing its internal crisis … (Suvchinskii, 1925)

In the Eurasianists' vision of the pre-revolutionary decade, the ocean of the elemental forces of the masses was deeply alienated from the educated classes, the intelligentsia, which was culturally foreign to the masses and was concentrated on its own petty problems. Incapable of transgressing its own narrow horizons determined by the artificial European civilization, the intelligentsia failed to bridge this gap and to propose a national vision for Russia. The Eurasianists may have shared with the philosophers of the 1900s–1910s their interest in Orthodoxy and their search for a moral regeneration of society on the principles of Christianity and nationalism. However, they presented themselves as a new generation that was free of indecisiveness and lack of will, which they deemed to be a characteristic of the Russian elite in the decade preceding the revolution. Pushing this rhetoric even further, the Eurasianists began to use anti-intellectualist tropes usually associated with fascist movements in interwar Europe. In a letter to a younger participant in the Eurasianist movement, Petr Savitskii outlined his vision of the generational difference between the Eurasianists and the "Sophians," members of the "Brotherhood of St. Sophia", a religious group of intellectuals restored in emigration by S. N. Bulgakov (Evtuhov, 1997, pp. 1–17; Kolerov, 1994)[20]:

> They (the Sophians) sense a different nature of will in us. Compared to previous generations, the Eurasianists are a new type of men due to their spiritual constitution and their societal actions. Berdiaev…used to acknowledge that. They are corrupted by reflection. We, for better or for worse, are alien to this debilitating reflection. In that sense, G. V. Florovsky belongs more to them than to us. I have said this about father Sergii (Bulgakov) but the same can be said about N. A. Berdiaev, perhaps in a different form. Nevertheless, in A. V. Kartashev the above-mentioned nature is combined with something else, which makes him closer to us than to them …(Savitskii, 1924)

Anton Vladimirovich Kartashev, a Church historian and the minister of confessions in the Provisional Government, was a member of the Kadet party and an associate of Petr Struve in emigration. Due to his age and his prominence before the Bolshevik takeover, he belonged to the older generation of émigrés. In 1921–1926 he was involved in an attempt to forge a united émigré anti-Bolshevik front and developed his own vision of Russian national unity which was centered on the military brotherhood. The epitome of this brotherhood was the experience of the White troops in evacuation camps in the Balkans. In 1920–1921 Kartashev toured Russian émigré locations to lecture on his nationalist ideas, which fitted very well with the fascist ideologies of interwar Europe (Samover, 1998, pp. 334–396).[21] This hunger for action and this imagery of national unity propagated by Kartashev made him into a figure more acceptable for the Eurasianists, who sought new ideological forms.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Berdiaev, indeed, acknowledged the novelty of the Eurasianist mood. In his review of Eurasianist publications he wrote about the movement:

> Eurasianism is first of all an emotional, not an intellectual movement. Its emotion is a reaction of creative national and religious instincts to the catastrophe we endured. This kind of spiritual formation can turn into Russian Fascism … (Berdiaev, 1925, p. 101)

Berdiaev accepted the Eurasianists' claim to be a new generation yet he reserved some critical remarks for them. He thought that they were, indeed, "a new generation that grew up during the war and the revolution. This generation does not feel itself related to our religious generation and does not want to carry on our legacy. It is inclined to refute all that is connected to the problem of new religious consciousness. Its will is directed towards simplification, elementization, towards everyday life forms of Orthodoxy. Its will is directed toward traditionalism and it is afraid of and suspicious of any religious creativity" (Berdiaev, 1925, p. 101).

The Eurasianist's generational rhetoric presupposed a division in the succession of the Russian intellectual and cultural elite. On the one side of this division were the Eurasianists, the first post-Revolutionary thinkers who offered a distinctly illiberal and fiercely nationalist vision of "overcoming" the Revolution. On the other side were the intellectuals of the older generation, whom the Eurasianists accused of inaction, indecisiveness, and, ultimately, of having missed an opportunity to translate the religious renaissance of the 1900s into a viable nationalist program.

2. Revolution as revelation: every day life confession of faith

As all Eurasianists agreed, the Revolution was not just a social turmoil but a profound spiritual upheaval. To interpret it the Eurasianist thinkers drew on the cultural fermentation of the last pre-revolutionary decade with its

[20] In 1923–1924 the Eurasianists were embroiled in a conflict with Sergei Bulgakov and members of his Brotherhood of St Sofia. Bulgakov initially invited the Eurasianists to take part but his invitation was declined by the Eurasianists, who saw in this initiative a continuation of "degenerate" traditions of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia. Moreover, the Eurasianists thought of Bulgakov's initiative as a submission to Catholic influences (since the brotherhood reminded them of a Catholic order). On the development of this conflict see Kolerov (1994). On Bulgakov, see Evtuhov, 1997, pp. 1–17.

[21] On the proto-Fascist ideology of Kartashev see Samover (1998), pp. 334–396.

unceasing attacks on the philistine bourgeois spirit of European modernity, fascination with the Asian connections of Russia's past, and religious revival. The central figure of the Silver Age as interpreted by the Eurasianists was, undoubtedly, Alexander Blok. In 1920, an edition of Alexander Blok's poem *The Twelve* with Suvchinskii's foreword was published.[22] In the publication, Suvchinskii suggested that the new generation of the Russian intelligentsia would be able to understand and accept the Revolution only "when it comes as close to the Revolution as Blok did and would listen to it as Blok did (Suvchinskii, 1920, p. 12)." In a programmatic article in the Eurasianist almanac Suvchinskii emphasized the importance of Blok for the Eurasianists' own "perception of times (Suvchinskii, 1922a, pp. 147–176)."

For one, the Eurasianists shared Blok's fascination with the "elemental forces" of the masses. In 1908 Blok wrote his famous cycle of poems "On the Kulikovo Battlefield" inspired by the struggle of the Muscovite forces against the Tatars in 1380. Referring to Blok's celebration of the steppe mare, flying in the great Asian spaces of Russia, Suvchinskii argued that Blok "already sensed these elements – this wind – which later, in his poem *The Twelve*, will have embraced the entire "God's world" (Suvchinskii, 1922a, p. 171)". Blok in 1908 delivered his presentation under the title "The People and the Intelligentsia," read by the author in the Religious and Philosophic Society, and reprinted in the Socialist Revolutionary press in 1918, in which he lamented the divisions between the people and the educated classes and pondered the metaphor of Gogol, who represented Russia as a troika flying in an unknown direction. What, Blok asked, if the noise that we are hearing is the sound of that troika's bell, and what if "the troika is flying right into us?" Seeking truth with the people, the intelligentsia is throwing itself under the horses of the troika (Blok, 1918a, pp. 91–92).

In the essay "Elements and culture" Blok again returned to the issue of the upcoming catastrophe and compared it to the earthquake that destroyed Calabria and Messina. In a dramatic and unprecedented way Blok proclaimed that the Russian intelligentsia found itself caught between the vengeance of Culture, which appeared in the form of steel bayonets and machines and the vengeance of the elements, the rising masses of the people.[23] Suvchinskii took a note of Blok's vision, reminding his own readers that Blok "spoke of the vengeance of the elements against the laboratory-like human culture of steel and concrete (Suvchinskii, 1922a, P. 170)".

Blok's vision of the great clash between the educated classes and the people was profoundly pessimistic with respect to the intelligentsia's destiny: Blok saw no signs of will for life in the "degenerate" intelligentsia and in the "civilization in general." In the arrival of the masses, though, Blok sensed a new creative force that will transform human experience and help the rebirth of culture as opposed to soulless civilization.

When the revolutionary events broke out, Blok produced his famous poem *The Twelve*, the interpretation of which scholars still debate even today (Schapiro, 1986). He also published an essay under the title "The Intelligentsia and the Revolution," to the ideas of which the Eurasianists would have fully subscribed. Briefly, Blok's essay appealed to the educated classes to "listen to the music of the revolution" and embrace it as a means to destroy the world of the philistine bourgeois. As Blok suggested, "the bourgeois has firm ground under his feet, as the pig has its manure. He has family, capital, the service position, decorations, and rank, God on the icon and the Tsar on the throne. Take all this away from him and everything will collapse (Blok, 1918b)." Blok celebrated that collapse and hoped that it will help to free the way for what he called "music," the elemental powers of creativity hidden in the masses, connected in his imagination with the elemental powers of the social revolution: "All that which was the object of veneration by the civilization, all these cathedrals of Rheims, all these Messinas, all these ancient estates [of Russia], all this will vanish without a sign. Undoubtedly, there will remain just one thing that was persecuted and chased away by the civilization: the spirit of music (Blok, 1918b)."

Blok represented a well-known feature of European modernism with its distaste for bourgeois conformism and standardization. What was unusual about Blok in European context was his "geocultural" interpretation of the elemental forces of the Revolution as "Asian." For Blok, the Russian masses were "Scythians", and their barbaric freshness contained the promise that European bourgeois conformism will be swiped away from Russia in the revolutionary eruption. Eurasianism accepted Blok's criticism of European civilization and the notion of Russia's "Asian" potential. Even Nikolai Trubetskoi, ever suspicious of modernist experimentations, wrote to Roman Jakobson in 1922 that he sensed a mood conducive to Eurasianism in the writings of Blok (Jakobson, 1985a, p. 15).

Still, the Eurasianists also had reservations about Blok's ideas. As Suvchinskii put it, "Blok remained until the end in the stormy twilight and he did not reach out to the dawn… He remained deaf to music. He thought he was listening to music but in fact he heard only…the noise of chaos (Suvchinskii, 1922a, p. 174)." For Suvchinskii, Blok remained a thinker who was capable of conveying the feeling yet failed to get across the formula. It was up to the Eurasianists to find these ideological formulae to approach the problems raised by Blok: the feeling of disillusionment in the European civilization, the sense of the elemental powers of the Russian revolution, and the promise of renovation that they brought with them.

The Eurasianist thinkers cast their own response to the Revolution in religious terms. To be sure, they were not professional theologians, and when they ventured into discourses on faith, their writings were no match to that of their critics. Such philosophers and theologians as N. A. Berdiaev and S. N. Bulgakov stood in this respect far above the Eurasianist modest attempts to invoke religion.

[22] The publication came out in the Russian-Bulgarian Publishing House, which Suvchinskii founded in Sofia together with N. S. Zhekulin, a well-known journalist from Kiev, and R. G. Mollov, a Bulgarian who made a career in the Russian imperial service Apart from publishing the first Eurasianist texts, the Russian-Bulgarian Publishing House was also charged with the production of P. B. Struve's journal *Russkaia Mysl'*.

[23] A. Blok, Stikhia i kul'tura//Sochineniia. pp. 92–101.

Yet, philosophical and theological foundations of the Eurasianist response to Russian modernism's criticism of the modern civilization were inspired by the Russian philosophical tradition. Nineteenth-century Russian philosophers, Vladimir Solov'ev and Nikolai Fedorov in particular, were concerned with the Orthodox concept of *theosis*, the transformation of the person into the likeness to God (Valliere, 2000).[24] In the Russian tradition, the concept was often referred to as *obozhestvlenie*, the extension of God's realm into the world of human. *Theosis* stood for the deeply religious, Christian transformation of all aspects of human life. In Nikolai Fedorov's philosophy, this interest in *theosis* led to the elaboration of a philosophical conception of the "common cause," with the latter referring to the overcoming of death by the united forces of Christian humanity (Fedorov, 1983; Hagemeister, 1989).[25] As Irina Paperno demonstrated, philosophical concerns of Solov'ev and Fedorov played a profoundly important role in the cultural strategies of Russian modernism. Late imperial artists and writers engaged in a range of activities meant to "create life" by eliminating the boundaries between everyday life and art (Masing-Delic, 1992; Paperno, 1994, pp. 1–12).[26] Similarly, the Eurasianist interpretation of this philosophical tradition focused on the construction of a new society permeated by the totalizing spirit of Orthodox spirituality. In such a society, the boundaries between the domain of faith and the domain of everyday life were to be overcome, and a universal "psychological order" had to become a principle of the Russian national life.

The leading Eurasianist thinker who undertook the work of elaborating Eurasianist response to the Revolution by drawing on the modernist cultural fermentation was Petr Suvchinskii. Drawing on Bergson's philosophy of intuition and time (the influence was never admitted), Suvchinskii argued that the Russian revolution was an elemental event, and therefore it was futile to seek the guilty ones and to resist it. People can complain about elemental events, they can resist them, but most people instinctively choose to accept such events as something beyond their control (Suvchinskii, 1922b, pp. 99–102). The Revolution was a profoundly significant event, and such events have the potential to unite people and imbue them with a new spirit of unity:

> An event is just some form, which is registered by human psyche. There are formless epochs, epochs of formless human being, poor in real events, but there are also inspired and engraved epochs, when every day and every hour bring with them changes of life activities, ferments of the heroic and eventful principles. Events always organize and unite humanity. The absence of events gives birth to psychological flabbiness, which breeds divisiveness. Instead of an organized psychological order there emerge individual, divided moods, contradictory and egocentric worldviews… (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 102)

Suvchinskii believed that this immediate psychological response to grandiose historical transformations must be opposed to "dead" historical analysis which sees every event as part of a logical and rational process understood by economists and sociologists. For Suvchinskii, this immediate psychological response is the only one that has the potential to open "the great revelations of spirit. It is the most precious of all that any contemporary can possess" (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 102). On the contrary, a historical analysis deprived of that immediacy of experience does not allow people to understand "those changes and breaks of the main order of human psyche, which occurred in our own days" (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 103).

Arguing the religious nature of the Russian revolution as a period of spiritual unraveling, Suvchinskii wrote:

> No, this is not a metaphor: one needs to believe that there are times when Heaven is given to humans, when it opens for the blind in convulsions of its deepest forces, in the saturation of its profound being, and then the humanity catches the flight of the stars, the humanity understands the order and the choir of the earth, and gives to its coming descendants its visions and dreams… But the link closes and the time ends, the skies fly away from the earth again and appear empty, and for the new generations these visions and dreams seem to be alien and wild…(Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 107)

For Suvchinskii, the Russian pre-Revolutionary intelligentsia was exactly the generation that lived during the times when "the sky flew far away from earth". As Suvchinskii put it, "the upper layers of [Russian culture before the Revolution] flew upwards, into the empty and dull skies, and closed themselves in "pure" spirituality" (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 110). Spirit without the flesh becomes a ghost, Suvchinskii argued, and this was the fate of the Russian modernist culture. Its fascination with Symbolism was for Suvchinskii a sign of loosing firm grounds in the sense of reality (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 111).

For Suvchinskii, Russian Symbolism and its interest in "false mysticism" were all omens of how abstract and rationalistic Russian pre-revolutionary culture had become. His own alternative suggested a holistic vision of life imbued with religious meaning and practice:

> Only in a combination of mysticism and realism in one organic whole, only in real religious culture, that is, in a mystic revival of the multiplicity of life experiences and in re-concretization of abstract mysticism is the salvation and the exit from the dead-end of modern cultural and spiritual consciousness, which is torn into pieces, divided, and lost … (Suvchinskii, 1922b, p. 112)

But if modern consciousness, traumatized by loss of coherence and misled by rationalistic interpretations of reality, had to find its salvation in the transgression of boundaries between the realms of "realism" understood as immediate life experiences and their interpretations, and of "mysticism", which for Suvchinskii meant religiosity, then what were the signs that such salvation was possible?

[24] See Valliere (2000). Esp. pp. 160–162 for a discussion of Soloviev's interpretation of theosis as opening the way for Orthodox encounter with the modern civilization.

[25] Fedorov (1983). On Fedorov, see Hagemeister (1989).

[26] On Fedorov's influence on the Silver Age see Masing-Delic (1992); Paperno (1994). See also Paperno's contribution in that volume under the title The Meaning of Art: Symbolist Theories. Pp. 13–23.

Where could people find the signposts to determine their path for spiritual regeneration? What should this "real religious culture" entail? How could it be achieved, and where could it seek historical inspirations? Here, Berdiaev's observation regarding "everyday life forms" of religiosity in Eurasianism was extremely well taken. The Eurasianist thinkers – led by Petr Suvchinskii in this instance – imagined such new religious culture in terms of "bytovoe ispovednichestvo" (everyday life confession of faith). Suvchinskii believed that religious mysticism should penetrate everyday life of Russians and that the Russian revolution opened the possibility for such a fusion. The historical precedent for an era colored by "*bytovoe ispovednichestvo*" was located by the Eurasianist thinkers in the experiences of Slavic principalities in the wake of the Mongol invasion.

3. The Mongols as Bolsheviks: in search for an ideal past

The Eurasianists' critique of the pre-revolutionary period of Russian culture and their search for a new religiously inspired national mystique found a remarkable parallel in the view of Russian history that the movement came to expose. This view, as is well known, privileged Russia's Asian connections. However, the Eurasianist attention to Asian influences in Russia's past were inspired not just by a desire to salvage the former imperial space from the centrifugal forces of minority nationalisms by endowing the empire with a cultural content of the Eurasian civilization. The Eurasianist thinkers utilized their scandalous at the time re-invention of Russian Empire as an heir to the nomadic empires of the East to sustain their vision of a totalizing national spirit born out of humiliation and devastation. In the Eurasianist strategy, this totalizing national spirit provided hope for a non-Communist transformation of Russia in the wake of the Bolsheviks' collapse.

In 1923–1924, Nikolai Trubetskoi elaborated some of the key postulates of Eurasianism with regard to Russian history, which resulted in the publication of several articles and brochures. Even for the general public, his new account of Russian history was quite shocking. Even if prior to 1917 one of the leading Russian historians, Aleksandr Evgen'evich Presniakov, admitted that it was impossible to define to which nation the Kievan Rus' belonged, Russia or Ukraine, Trubetskoi's new idea that there was virtually nothing in common between Kiev and Moscow was very radical (Presniakov, 1938, pp. 1–11). Trubetskoi argued that Kievan Russia occupied a territory different from the territory of Russia as a whole: "that state, or rather that group of more or less independent principalities subsumed by the name Kievan Rus' in no way corresponds to the Russian state which we presently consider our motherland (Trubetskoi, 1925; Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 161).[27]."

In part, Trubetskoi's dismissal of the Kievan period was geopolitical and imperial. Kievan Rus' occupied just one part of the Russian imperial space. According to Trubetskoi, this medieval Slavic principality based on the Dnepr river basin was doomed. It was surrounded by more powerful and economically more viable neighbors, such as the Khazars in the lower Volga (the self-defeating nature of his example, apparently escaped Trubetskoi: in fact, the Khazar state fell because of the attacks by Kievan Rus' princes!). Kievan Rus' could not extend its territory and was open to attack from the steppe. The only outlet for Kievan energies was in the internal strife, which proved fatal when the Mongols arrived. Therefore, as Trubetskoi suggested, Russian historians were wrong to assign Kievan Rus' to the position of the ancestor of modern Russian statehood.

What was, then, the historical precedent for the state that Trubetskoi "considered his motherland"? As he suggested, "a glance at a historical map reveals that at one time almost all the territory of the present day USSR constituted a part of the Mongolian empire founded by the Great Genghis-Khan" (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 163)." Correspondingly, Trubetskoi proposed to consider the empire of the Mongols as the predecessor of the Russian state, and not the principalities of the Kievan period. The core of the Mongol empire was formed by the geographical system of the steppe and the rivers. This system covered Eurasia, the separate continent on the landmass of the Old World, and its population represented a gradual transition from the Buriat–Mongolian race in the east, through the Finnish and Turkic tribes in the Volga basin, to the Slavs in the west. Trubetskoi's favorite metaphor to describe that transition was "rainbow". The integrity of the ethnographic rainbow was determined by the geographic systemic factors. As Trubetskoi put it, "by its very nature, Eurasia is historically predestined to comprise a single state entity (Trubetskoi, 1991, pp. 164–165)." The importance of Genghis-Khan in Eurasian history was underscored by the fact that he fulfilled the unification of Eurasia, and since "Eurasia is geographically, ethnographically, and economically an integrated system, its political unification was historically inevitable (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 167)." Thus, for Trubetskoi, Genghis-Khan was of profound historical importance because his actions had helped realize the "systemic" nature of the Eurasian continent in the form of a single state.

But Genghis-Khan was important not just because he united the entire Eurasian continent. The great Mongol warrior, according to Trubetskoi's reconstruction, professed ideas that corresponded to what the Eurasianists called "ideocracy": the rule of a powerful idea that transcended particular realms of culture, scholarship, religion, or politics. For Genghis-Khan, according to Trubetskoi, such idea was in the absolute superhuman law, to which he himself and his entire realm were made subject. Genghis-Khan selected his associates from those people who understood these great principles and who valued their honor and their principles more than life itself. Generally, Genghis-Khan despised representatives of settled societies as people corrupt by material interest; he preferred nomads, who had little attachment to material goods. Correspondingly, Genghis-Khan valued deeply religious people, for whom earthly comfort was of minor importance. According to "Genghis-Khan's state ideology," "the power of the ruler must rest not upon some ruling class, estate, nation, or

[27] Trubetskoi (1925). Here and after quoted from the English translation Trubetskoi (1991).

official religion, but upon people of a specific psychological type (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 174).

It is revealing that Trubetskoi wrote the brochure The *Legacy of Chingis-Khan* specifically for the Soviet audience. As his correspondence with Suvchinskii, who was in charge of Eurasianist publications, demonstrated, the brochure was distributed on the émigré market against Trubetskoi's clearly expressed wishes. He was aware of the intellectual weaknesses of his constructions and worried about his scholarly reputation. The brochure, with its vision of new religious and psychological order emerging from a repressed society was meant to awaken educated Russians in the USSR to the striking historical parallels.

Trubetskoi connected the past and the present in his account of the period following the Mongol invasion of Russian principalities in a way that allowed him to see both the Mongol invasion and the Bolshevik revolution as periods of dramatic spiritual transformations crucial to the emergence of Russian national identity (Yerushalmi, 1982; Zerubavel, 1995)."[28] It is hard not to recognize in Trubetskoi's description of Genghis-Khan's nomads the utopian project that the Eurasianists developed for contemporary Russia, where the Revolution had allegedly produced a new psychological type of men, decisive and powerful, who would transform Russia on the Eurasianist principles of the state ruled by a powerful idea. But, perhaps, nowhere in Trubetskoi's historical account was the connection of the past and the present as visible as in his description of the emergence of Muscovite Russia as a result of the Mongol yoke.

Trubetskoi described the processes of transformation of Moscow under the impact of the Mongols in the same way the Eurasianists viewed the transformation of Russia under the impact of the Bolsheviks: "The Russians' anguish and their keen awareness of the humiliation suffered by Russian national pride merged with a strong new impression engendered by the grandeur of a foreign conception of the state. All Russians were disoriented, the abyss seemed to yawn before them at every step, and they began to search desperately for some solid ground. An eruption of acute spiritual tumult and turmoil was the result – complex processes whose significance is generally undervalued (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 175) Trubetskoi had found in the distant past a pattern for the emergence of "national spirituality" and "national rigor" and that pattern was also rediscovered by the Eurasianists in Bolshevik Russia. The Bolsheviks, too, had impressed upon the Russians a "foreign conception of the state," and the Eurasianists spoke in their first collection of the need to find firm grounds after the catastrophe. The Bolshevik "yoke," according to the Eurasianists, also generated a religious and spiritual revival, of which the Eurasianists themselves were but a part, and it led to the emergence of a new type of people in Russia, active and decisive.

According to Trubetskoi, the Mongol invasion and the destruction of the Russian principalities by the Mongols resulted in the "extraordinary vigorous development of religious life. For ancient Rus' the period of Tatar rule was above all else an epoch of religion ." Let us recall that Suvchinskii, one of Trubetskoi's closest friends, insisted that the Russian revolution "flew under the sign of religious transformation (Glebov, 2006, pp. 163–223; Suvchinskii, 1921, S. 14–27)." Trubetskoi insisted that the period of the Mongol yoke saw "an intense religious orientation of the inner life of Russians which suffused every product of the spirit, especially art, with its colors… This powerful upsurge in religious life was a natural accompaniment to that revaluation of values, to that disillusionment with life, which were caused by the calamity of the Tatar invasion" (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 176). The religious upheaval was paralleled in the 13th and 14th century Russia, according to Trubetskoi, by "an idealization of the national past" and by the rise of the spirit of heroism, "religious and nationalistic (Trubetskoi, 1991, pp. 176–177)." At the same time, examples of heroism were offset by cases of "abject moral degeneration", yet another sign of a "creative" epoch. Trubetskoi's conclusion was itself suffused with a hope for national renovation and re-invigoration, at least in as far as his interpretation of the post-Mongol period promised: "Epochs of this sort, with their soaring flights and steep decline, epochs characterized by extreme psychological contradictions that reflect a profound shock to a nation's spiritual life – such epochs create an atmosphere congenial to the emergence of a new national type; they are harbingers of the birth of a new era in the nation's history (Trubetskoi, 1991, p. 177)."

In accordance with these historical parallels, the Eurasianist scholars sought to uncover in Soviet Russia signs of the dawn of a new national era. Some, like Suvchinskii and Mirsky, found it in the realm of art and literature, and some, like Trubetskoi and Jakobson, recognized its elements in the emergence of a particularly Russian science. All Eurasianist thinkers believed that the Bolshevik dictatorship presided over a profound transformation of Russian life, and waited for the emergence of that new and decisive "psychological type" of Russians that will recognize the fault of the Bolsheviks' Europeanizing spirit and embrace Eurasianism as a guiding ideology. This expectation also led to Eurasianism becoming mired in the web of underground contacts with the Soviet secret services as the movement attempted to propagate its ideas within the USSR. ***

The Eurasianist movement was not born out of any encounter between the Russians and their steppe nomadic neighbors. Rather, it was a product of cultural fermentation in the capitals of fin-de-siècle Russia re-cast in the post-revolutionary atmosphere of displacement and disillusionment with Russia's Europeanizing convulsions. The Eurasianist thinkers took from the modernist milieu of late imperial Russia its criticism of bourgeois society and its interest in the spiritual and religious searches for a re-invigoration of national life. In the aftermath of the revolutionary disintegration of the Russian Empire, the Eurasianist thinkers also mobilized Russia's Asian connections to construe a national mystique focused on the Orthodox religiosity.

[28] Methodological insights for analyses of "national historical narratives" informed by the reading of the past through particular lenses of the present are provided by seminal works in Jewish history. Perhaps, the most influential work has been Yerushalmi (1982). See also Zerubavel (1995).

By the middle of the 1920s the Eurasianists had already drawn the outline of this mystique. In 1926 Trubetskoi met in Vienna Othmar Spann, one of those intellectuals in the German-speaking world whose ideas helped create the climate of animosity to liberalism and democracy in the years before Hitler's coming to power (Siegfried, 1974)."[29] Following this encounter, Trubetskoi spent significant time elaborating a Eurasanist political theory, which resulted in the conception of "ideocracy." According to this conception, a new type of society was to emerge to be ruled by a particular group of people (the ruling layer, *praviashchii sloi*). This group was to be constituted by a selection (*otbor*) based on the "commonality of worldview (Trubetskoi, 1927). With these notions Trubetskoi completed the translation of the national mystique into a fully fledged political conception akin to a whole range of ideologies that fall under the rubric of "generic fascism" (Mosse, 1979, pp. 1–45; Griffin, 1993, pp. 1–55).[30] Eurasianism presented its own palingenetic myth of renovation of society based on quasi-historical and irrational assumptions, and sought to convert as many as possible to its cause both among the Russian émigrés and in the USSR. As scholars begin to unravel connections between the rise of fascist movements and the imperial experiences (Grosse, 2005).[31] Eurasianism's place among its European counterparts becomes less and less peculiar. This place among European reactions to modernity in the interwar period ironically subverts the very notion of the *Sonderweg* development that Eurasianism iterated and that underlies much of the use of Eurasia today

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[29] On Spann, see Siegfried (1974).

[30] This approach to fascism as a "generic" term that designates ideologies that demanded renovation and celebrated will to power is most articulatedly represented by Mosse (1979). For a recent discussion of "generic fascism" see Griffin (1993). Esp. pp. 1–55.

[31] See Grosse (2005). pp. 115–134.

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